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The Commonweal

February 17, 1950

The Rearming of Germany

Waldemar Gurian

The Moslem Wall

Jean Danielou

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John C. Cort

VOLUME LI 15c NUMBER 19

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The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

The H-Bomb

TO SEE why, for political and military reasons, President Truman could not have done otherwise than give orders to proceed with the making of the hydrogen bomb, it is necessary only to consider what a negative decision would have meant. Clearly, for one thing, such a decision would have encouraged the Russians to advance further into the West—confident that they had far superior weapons. For it has repeatedly been made all too plain that any sign of weakness, appeasement, or "disarmament by example" simply eggs on a constantly expanding aggressor. To rely on inferior weapons would be to expose ourselves to unnecessary slaughter and to abandon Western Europe, and perhaps eventually our own country, to a dictatorship that tramples basic human rights and makes life unendurable.

The decision to make the bomb involves the United States in increasingly greater, or more urgent, responsibilities. As the dozen leading American physicists said in their statement, the only justification for making a weapon of such destructive power is "to prevent its use." It is an act of self-defense. The scientists further declare that the bomb's manufacture is of such a nature as to "lend itself to international control."

That does not necessarily mean that the President would do well to seek out the Russians for new parleys on atomic weapon controls. It does mean that this nation must go far deeper into the possibilities of setting up, through the UN, a system of controls that will halt the atomic arms race. As the scientists say, comprehensive, continual and effective inspection must be embodied in any such international set-up.

The obstacles to drawing up a foolproof plan, when the adversary cannot be relied on to keep his word, are tremendous. Yet the United States now has the duty to plumb the possibility and to press steadily toward effective world government. Moreover, we can attack the problem indirectly by stepping up the Voice of America, as Senator McMahon suggests, and by sharply accelerating the intensity of American efforts to enable other peoples to make a go of things outside the Iron Curtain—which is one way we *can* use the power of example.

But what is the Christian to think of this new weapon, when a single H-bomb could destroy the greatest cities of the world and when vast areas now peopled by millions of human beings would be rendered unfit for habitation "for possibly centuries to come?"

The defense of Christendom against the Turk provides something of an historical parallel, but in that instance there was no comparable problem about justifiable weapons. Moreover, we are seeking to defend today a civilization which is materialistic rather than Christian in its inspiration. The problem arises in a world which responds at times to the persuasiveness of ideals but which basically depends on naked force for its big decisions.

Although the new weapon is of "an entirely different order of magnitude," it differs from a cannon shell, say, rather in degree than in kind. Or to take an example which is closely parallel: there is clearly only a difference in degree between super-atom bombing and the rain of fire and saturation bombing which we visited on enemy cities in World War II. The H-Bomb is only one horror in a world of genocide, appalling slums, forced labor, racial hatreds, injustices and brutality.

DESPITE all this, the new bomb will continue deeply to trouble the individual Christian conscience. The many who were appalled when American fliers launched the first atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki can find in this new weapon only the realization of their worst fears.

According to their tradition, Christians must always consider the rightness of the means employed to attain a legitimate end. However sure we may be that President Truman has made the only decision possible on military and political grounds, and while we cannot condemn his decision as morally evil, its implications are such that the Christian conscience can hardly rest content at the prospect of the eventual use of a weapon of this sort.

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• NEXT WEEK •

The author of *Father Malachy's Miracle* writes admiringly of the authors of *The Heart of the Matter* and *Brideshead Revisited.* In "Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh," BRUCE MARSHALL discusses what the two distinguished English novelists have in common and where they differ:

"Although Greene is generally a grim writer and Waugh is ordinarily a gay writer, there is never the cold Greene as there is sometimes the cold Waugh. . . . But Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh both make me want to be holy because they write good English, draw characters accurately and present a whole world for me to read about."

Good Fellows Get Together

WHEN the leaders of the Republican party met in Washington February 7 for the kick-off play of the 1950 campaign, a $1-a-box chicken supper was served. The choice of meal was intended as a sardonic comment on the Democrats' recent swank $100-a-plate affair in New York. As such it was widely publicized throughout the country; and, who knows, the wily refreshments committee may have done the party some good. But the choice also betrayed a big soft spot in Republican psychology. The ordinary newspaper reader who dropped his paper was left thinking about the Democrats at least as much as of their rivals. Even the simple matter of what Republicans in conclave eat was turned into a question of reflex and reaction to the Democrats' own positive choice. Nobody can get very interested in a meal as a meal when he knows that fundamentally it is to be appraised as a negative comment on someone else's feast.

It is somewhat the same story with the program the Republicans drew up. The statement roundly denounced many features of the Fair Deal and did so with a certain practiced flourish and style. But it was notably weak as a program meant to stand by itself. The Republicans, it seems, are opposed to high taxes, deficit spending and at least some of the "socialistic" measures of Mr. Truman's program. They are unequivocally opposed to fascism, communism and the presence of CP members, sympathizers or fellow-travelers on the federal pay-roll. They are against subversives and for veterans, against tyranny and for liberty, against totalitarianism and for democracy. They are for a lot of good things and a lot of good people, of course, but they are mostly, in this statement, opposed to things. Above all, of course, they are opposed to the present Administration and the way things are going in Washington. "Basic American principles are threatened by the Administration's program for a planned economy modeled on the Socialist governments of Europe, including price and wage controls, rationing, socialized medicine, regional authorities and the Brannan plan, with its controls, penalties, fines and jail sentences." *"Liberty Against Socialism"* was decided upon as the Republican campaign slogan for 1950.

But liberty, above all, is a positive thing. It is not a question of removing all that one feels is insidious from the Fair Deal and then, *voila!* you have liberty. The Republicans need a program that can and will stand by itself, without any reference to Mr. Truman's Fair Deal. The newest "crusade" is compounded mostly of denunciation, the long repudiated psychology of me-too and the bloodless appeal of anything-you-can-do-I-can-do-better, with a good strong dose of invective semantics thrown in for good meas-

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ure. Despite the excited flurry and the enthusiastic talk of a crusade and all, the new program turned out to be about as stimulating as the manifesto of a garden club denouncing communism. Even the civil rights issue, a weak point with the Democrats, was left without guts and is found in the form of a glittering generality rather than in specific commitments.

There is, as the Republicans know only too well, a whole generation of American adults who have only a dim historic memory of a Republican regime in Washington. Many of them are old enough now to have children of their own ready to ask, "Daddy, who are the Republicans?" "They are the other party, son, opposed to the Democrats." "What are they *for*?" A good question, and it deserves a good answer. The latest "crusade" manifesto, unfortunately, just isn't it.

Electing the President

THE House and the states have yet to judge the virtue of the Lodge proposal for amending the method by which the president is elected, but the Senate approved it the first of this month. If the proposal were to become law it would have some interesting effect. New York and Ohio and the other big states would no longer be the prep-schools for presidents they are today. The amendment would divide a state's electoral vote in proportion to the popular vote, and a hopeful candidate with majority support in New York would no longer bring an irresistible dowry of 47 electoral votes to the convention. We might even see a president from Nevada.

The minority parties and groups who now control the balance of power in some states would lose that weight, and their influence on the Democratic and Republican platforms would accordingly be reduced.

The strategy of the political parties would certainly have to be revised. They would bid for national rather than regional support. The Democrats would make a much more vigorous appeal to the Midwest, and the Republicans could no longer ignore the South, where they could build a real opposition organization.

There are disadvantages to the amendment that are not seen so easily. Professor Edward S. Corwin of Princeton recently made an extensive statement of them. The principle of proportional representation is applied to the election of the president. All the minority parties (above a minimum percentage) receive automatic national influence according to the size of their vote. Professor Corwin cites the argument that "splinter parties, being pressure-group parties, are inveterate foes both of political moderation and—since their tendency is to regroup—of political stability. . . ."

He also points out the important fact, so far generally ignored, that the amendment provides for election of the president by plurality rather than the present majority. This would be somewhat of an additional encouragement to splinter parties. His conclusion here is convincing: "Presidential influence has become the most prominent, the most dominant, element of our constitutional system, and this fact of itself forbids the idea of our instituting a system . . . which might make plurality presidents the rule rather than the exception."

Corwin makes a counter proposal to elect members of the Electoral College by district. The difference between what the Senate has recommended and the Corwin proposal is one of principle: the Senate's amendment, with its major advantages, introduces the principle of proportional representation and with it danger to the stability of the major-party system. It is a principle quite distinct from Professor Corwin's—that a locality's decision is made by the majority with no automatic concession to the minority. His is the principle that so-far underlies the whole American system of elections—presidential, congressional and local. This difference should be clearly understood by the House and the states when considering the amendment.

Blue Potatoes

IN A WORLD in which two-thirds of the people live close to the margin of subsistence, there is always something horrifying about the deliberate destruction of food. The dumping of $25,000,000 worth of potatoes, ordered by Secretary of Agriculture Brannan, does not quite come under this category. For the surplus in question is to be dyed blue and then sold to farmers at a nominal fee for feed and fertilizer. These blue potatoes will go into the making of further nourishment.

However, the novel aspects of this step call attention to the mounting piles of surplus American farm products. There is a fabulous cave in Atchison, Kansas, which the Government has leased to store huge quantities of dried eggs and 20,000 tons of dried prunes. Government-owned butter, eggs, turkeys and other foodstuffs amount to four times what they were a year ago.

The Department of Agriculture says in its annual report that the biggest problem is how to get our surpluses into the hands of hungry peoples that do not have the dollars to buy them.

Presenting the problem in this fashion is a real advance over Department thinking on such matters in the early thirties, when killing newborn

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pigs seemed the only way to keep hog prices up. It is a line of thought that must be pursued to its practical conclusions. It is to be hoped that the mounting pressure on American storage facilities will compel attention to the incongruousness of bursting granaries in a hungry world.

Far Eastern Policy

NOW that Secretary Acheson has Marshal Tito and General Franco pretty well lined up on our side, we find ourselves in one of those contradictory and expedient partnerships that a good politician can always form without batting an eye. When he is forced into a situation like this, one usually comforts himself by saying that politics is hardly ever a clear choice between black and white anyway, which is true enough, and then he simply bears up under such internal contradictions as loaning millions to Marxist Tito while spending billions to run Marxist Stalin out of Europe. This sort of confusion is certainly nothing new in the world, but it seems to be an increasing and frightening modern malady.

The solid forms of our foreign policy, of our political ideals, are being lost in a world that is a jungle of confusing and confused ideologies, hypocrisies, lies and aggressions. We have met this going world with a mixed and pragmatic policy and the frightening thing about it is that it does not impart in other minds a sense of clarity, determination or confidence.

Probably nowhere is this so apparent as in our Far Eastern policy. Having "lost face" throughout the Orient, we now espouse the cause of national sovereignty for native peoples and offer them money on a haphazard basis, but we offer little or no help to defend them against Russian aggression and no over-all strategy for rebuilding and resisting, along the lines of the Marshall Plan. It is no wonder that the Koreans tell Mr. Jessup that they can't understand our policy; the best Mr. Jessup can do is to utter mild little phrases: the other day in Singapore he said that the United States would look on an "armed aggression" in Indo-China as a "very grave matter." Now just what, we ask, does that mean? Mr. Jessup doesn't know what it means—as he himself admits—because as yet we have no real policy in the Far East.

Most assuredly it is not going to be easy to get a good policy there. But before one takes action on anything at all, he must have fixed in his mind first a determination, a will to work toward a certain objective. After this first mental attitude is taken, he chooses his means. It is precisely this determination, this will to act, to reorganize the free peoples of Asia, that is being lost right now in our present policy of backing and filling in the Far East. So far we are just floundering around in a swiftly changing world.

Nicolas Berdyaev said five years ago that the modern mind is one that is surrounded by this sort of "fluid" condition in the world, one in which we tend to lose our grip on solid realities, on solid forms. The discoveries of contemporary physics blur the solid outlines of the cosmos, our preoccupation with psycho-analysis blurs the essential form of the human soul, and in the disintegration of the old world, the solid forms of social life and ethics are being lost too. Mr. Acheson's pragmatic foreign policy fits this pattern nicely, since it blurs in most minds the clear outlines, the resoluteness, of our political ideals; however defensible his policy may be, it is surely no clear cry in the jungle for others to follow.

There is not much to distinguish our present tactics in Asia from defeatism and unless we formulate some constructive, concrete plan at the Bangkok conference on Far Eastern policy, we have little hope of success there. For the easiest way to be utterly beaten is to defeat yourself.

No Substance, No Shadow

IT would seem that just about everything that can be said has been said about the Stromboli affair. Even in a week when the possible destruction of the planet was a matter of more than average concern, the developments in Italy gobbled up headlines and full front-page photographs in the tabloids.

There was nothing very new or very original about the affair. The familiar Hollywood pattern of broken marital promises, irresponsible public behavior and widespread scandals were themselves old stuff. But this affair was without the dubious "respectability" that quick divorces and the empty formality of register-office marriages, re-marriages and more re-marriages offer. As such it went a little further than others.

It was interesting to note the outrage and indignation of certain commentators who in the past have been more than tolerant of similar behavior when it was cloaked with the refinements of legality and the divorce-marry-divorce-marry Hollywood convention. Hollywood, they cried out, was being given a bad name. At this late date!

Respectability, of course, may bear some relation to morality, but the two are not the same thing. When they do become identified, morality itself is deprived of reason, of true meaning and, eventually, of the binding force it has. It is not surprising then to discover that even respectability, the one remaining restriction on behavior, is fast disappearing. At best it was never more than a shadow. When the moral substance is gone, it is bound to go, too.

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The Rearming of Germany

Is it just a simple question of, "Eventually — why not now?"

Waldemar Gurian

SHOULD Germany be rearmed? That this question is asked today shows how dangerous it is to use the word "never" in politics. For in 1945 and 1946 it seemed that the German armed forces had disappeared forever, that the German army and navy would never rise again after the collapse of Hitler's Third Reich. Now the discussions about German rearmament will not subside, though they are at the present moment less in the public's eye than the decision to build the hydrogen bomb.

There are principally two reasons for the present proposals to rearm Germany: first, the fact that the Soviet Union has become more and more the great power threatening the non-Communist world, and secondly, the West realizes more and more that a lasting European recovery is impossible without a stable Germany. The arguments for German rearmament seem to be irrefutable. A German army is necessary in order to balance Soviet military might. And a truly independent Germany must have an army of her own—you cannot avoid the rebirth of the German army after establishing the West German Republic, which is not a puppet state or a satellite, such as Russia's East German State.

But is the situation really as simple as that? Are there not certain complications? The complexity of the matter shows up when you have influential French voices saying that German participation in the defense against Russia is necessary, while at the same time many Germans reject all proposals to organize German military forces. Some of them—for one, Chancellor Adenauer—are ready to accept German participation in a European army. But others have come out vehemently against such a thing. A group of young Germans wrote to the Manchester *Guardian* that they were not ready to accept German militarization from the same General Clay who came to Germany to put an end to German militarism; some rather nationalist-minded Germans state that a German army cannot be recreated as long as there are occupation forces in Germany, and they add bitter complaints about the sad experiences of German officers who were regarded as war criminals and now will be used as mercenaries. These controversies prove that it is useful to weigh also the arguments of those who are against German rearmament. The divided German attitude shows that this question is not just a matter of pro- or anti-German feelings and policies. It must be said, too, that it is very unlikely—I would say impossible—to prevent in the long run the rise of some German military force. Those observers are correct who point out that the rise of an independent German government—and the government of President Heuss and Chancellor Adenauer is, despite all the powers held by the Allied Commissioners, such a government—prevents the perpetual control and supervision of German internal policies.

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BUT that is not the issue today. The issue is: Shall the Western Allies permit now, immediately, a German rearmament, before other pending questions are solved, before Germany has complete freedom in her foreign policies—at the moment Adenauer does not have an official foreign office—and before the drafting of a peace treaty?

There are many reasons for opposing German rearmament at this time. First: Would a German army be strong enough to be an important factor in case of war with the USSR? If the German army would be strong enough, what guarantees are there to prevent it from turning against the West—perhaps after having obtained some changes in Russian policies (e.g., the revision of the Oder Neisse line, something that is demanded by all Germans with the exception of a few flunkeys of Moscow)? Second: Who would meet the expenses involved in rebuilding and maintaining the new German army? Or should one try again, as Hitler did, to solve economic

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difficulties by a rearmament boom, reducing the unemployment which is quite high today in Western Germany? Should one permit again the development of German industries working for war? How will one permit the resurrection of a German army and rule out German tank production or the production of chemical products useful for military purposes? Third: Will not the creation of a German army in the West accelerate certain counter-plans and policies in the East? Will not a rearmament race between Eastern and Western Germany result, supported by the United States and the USSR? Must this race end necessarily in favor of the West?

And I might mention here the argument of a prominent German scholar, not a refugee, but a man who lived through the whole Hitler regime in Germany. Many Germans, he believes, will prefer to fight in the ranks of the Eastern army, for they know the comparatively mild fate they can expect if they are taken prisoner by the Western powers, whereas they know, too, what will happen to them if they are captured by the USSR. Fourth: Will the reestablishment of a German army not create dangerous controversies among the Atlantic powers? What will be the attitude of France—even if a French government would accept without heavy pressure (which seems unlikely) a plan for limited and controlled German militarization?

Not long ago the newspaper *Le Monde,* which is probably the most authoritative in France, published a piece saying that it seemed logical that the Germans should have an army to help defend their country, but that this army should be kept within the framework of the European Union. Right away, however, the French Foreign Office made it clear that in this instance, at least, the newspaper was not sounding the official French policy line but that it was merely talking for itself.

Would granting this permission for German rearmament not give to Communist propagandists much useful ammunition? Would not a situation arise which would discredit American influence more and more? The USA would be accused of turning against France and the Slavs and of making Germany the boss of Europe. And would not the creation of a German army be interpreted as covering up a withdrawal of American troops from Germany? Fifth: What would be the consequences in Germany herself?

When my German scholar friend was told that a German army would probably be revived soon, he exclaimed, "That is the end of all attempts to establish democracy in Germany," and another German who served in the last war as a staff officer in the German army confirmed this opinion. Who would be the officers in the new German army? Could one keep out all Nazis and extreme militarists? And what about the problem of the continuity with the old German army? Can one use officers now who have been held under suspicion as war criminals? Have not many officers suffered under such accusations? Can one condemn Marshall Manstein one day as a war criminal and on the next day establish a German army? Would not such an army be influenced by most cynical elements, by mercenaries who would be willing, at best, to change sides according to the fortunes of war, or at worst, be interested in taking revenge on those who initiated denazification and war criminal trials?

Would a German army now not demoralize German youth? They have been told that all militarism ought to end, and suddenly a new army is created, necessarily under the direction of those who played a rôle in the second World War? And finally, a new German army cannot be kept in limits. You cannot put a German army under control of foreign officers, for to do so is to make mercenaries without character and courage; and you cannot in the long run prevent her from controlling all the weapons of modern war.

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FOR all these reasons it seems to me that it is fortunate that apparently German rearmament has been at least postponed. A German army now would not be of much help but it would make a lot of trouble. It would be a wise and farsighted policy to work first for the establishment of a closer Union of European nations, to prevent any new poisoning of Franco-German relations—which is already threatening over the Saar issue—and to work out a peace treaty with Western Germany. In any case we ought to work first toward the objective of ending the many controls which cannot be applied anyhow, and then afterwards we can tackle the question of reviving the German armed forces. It may be that then the internal developments in Germany will have reached such a point that dangerous forces, whether Nazi or otherwise aggressively nationalistic, will have no chance to assume leading positions.

The establishment of a European Union would make it possible for us to accept German troops as part of a European army, under international control and command. But if one starts rebuilding German military power now, before a working European Union is established, I fear that all plans to establish it will end in failure. It is encouraging that many Germans realize this and are opposing German rearmament at this time.

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The Moslem Wall

As Western Christianity contacts the world of Islam, it faces a wall of resistance

Jean Danielou

IN THE measure that we study other civilizations, that we are in sympathy with them, the problem for us in converting them becomes one of understanding which of their aspects can be incorporated into Christianity and are to be nurtured. This requires a certain amount of stripping off of everything in us that is merely Western because, after all, our Christianity is a Westernized Christianity. Now, it is accidental that Christianity should have been Westernized. We must learn to extricate from its cultural background the essential message of the Gospel, and place this message in contact with other civilizations, to see in what measure it is to become incarnate in them.

Let us take the world of Islam, which is a very particular case, for Islam appeared after the beginning of the Christian era and, on the whole, it was grafted on the Jewish trunk. It is an extention of Jewish monotheism and at the same time it contains certain elements derived from Christian heretics of Abyssinia with whom Mohammed came in contact. The history of Mohammed on this point is most interesting. Mohammed tore his people away from polytheism and brought them to the cult of the true God, the One God. In that respect, his role has certainly been admirable. Many religious elements have been incorporated into his work.

Thus there is in Islam a sense of the greatness of God, of His holiness, a horror of all anthropomorphism and a sense of mystery, all of which make impossible any representation whatever of God. It even goes so far as to make an understanding of the Incarnation very difficult for the Moslems, and this is what in Islam must die. But there also exists in Islam—and we shall stress this aspect for a moment—a genuine sense of the transcendence of God, which is an essential religious category. On this point we must not hesitate to say that the Moslems may well have much to teach us. They have a far greater sense of the urgency of God, of the presence of God in society, than we have in our Western civilizations. The proportion of Moslems who pray every day is far greater than the proportion of Europeans or Americans. God is, from this point of view, deeply incorporated in their civilization. Mohammed was able to inculcate in his people an admirable religious sense.

You will remember how Psichari was dumbfounded when he saw Moslems praying out in the desert, and how he understood at that moment, as Carrel says in his little book on prayer, that prayer is a religious need as fundamental as breathing. One can stifle from lack of prayer just as one can stifle from lack of air. Indeed, our Western world, in its restless and activistic life, has completely lost this sense of prayer. That is why there are so many mentally ill and eccentrics in our midst: people don't pray enough. There is a well of silence within themselves to which they have no access, a domain of peace they know not how to enter. Islam has held on to these things. Therefore, should Islam be converted, we can imagine it would have a much more extensive religious social life than we have in our lands. Islam would then be in reality and forthwith a Christendom. In fact, this calls to mind our own Middle Ages, a period when civilization was deeply permeated by Christianity.

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BEYOND any doubt Islam erects a rampart against Christianity, perhaps the strongest of any—for there is nothing rarer than the conversion of a Moslem. In the end, even Father de Foucauld failed miserably in his efforts to convert the Moslems. This defeat was more important than a victory, in that it made him understand that there was only one thing for him to do: to adore the Eucharist in the heart of the desert, to make a minute beginning and to pray in the name of the Moslems until such time as they might begin to pray themselves. All the same, the attempt to evangelize Islam appears to be a complete failure. It is like striking against a stone wall.

What is this wall? It is everything in Islam that must die, everything in Islam that is false, and everything in Islam that is (one can even go so far as to use the word) demoniacal. The great conflict between Christ and Belial that ap-

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pears on every page of the Gospel goes on even today throughout the world. There is an evil power, a Satanic power, which holds souls in error and which persists.

This can help us to realize the dramatic and tragic nature of the missionary problem, inasmuch as it is a struggle to tear away souls and peoples from something that is opposed to Christianity, and is to its very roots the spirit of evil.

Well, there is in Islam a tremendous power of resistance. What is this power? It consists in Islam's own defects. We have already spoken of Islam's greatness, of its very great sense of God. But it has grave defects. First of all, Islam materializes religion and brings it down to the level it attained in the Old Testament, that is to say, the level of temporal reality. The greatest concern of the Jewish people was to extend their frontiers. Islam came back to that, to the idea of holy wars, to a kind of identification between the religious world and the political world, between the City of God and temporal society. This is an appalling obstacle, because it means that when a Moslem frees himself from his religion, he is also set free from his society. He who abjures Islam is by that very fact a traitor to society and a traitor to country; and whoever put him to death would consider such action pleasing to God, for the victim would be looked upon as a renegade. We can well see that any young man or young woman of Islam who was converted to Christianity would become a complete outcast from his society and his world. Conversion under such circumstances is a sacrfice almost beyond human strength. This is indeed a terrible obstacle.

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SUCH an obstacle exists in Islam. Another obstacle lies in Islam's moral compromise. Islam exemplifies the paradox of a religion whose religious exigencies are very great, but whose moral exigencies are somewhat relaxed. This is a comfortable attitude because it permits the satisfaction of religious needs in a way of life that is far from onerous. There are many people who would be very happy to get out of it thus easily, and Islam has seductive power over them. There are very few souls which have no religious aspirations, but there are many which have not the strength to follow through their aspirations within Christianity, because of the integrity of Christian morality. Many souls love Christ, but have not the strength to go to Him because of the demands Christianity makes. Islam makes its demand too, for as Father Charles, a Syrian missionary, has said somewhere, a religion that does not require certain efforts and sacrifices would not take hold. But Islam also finds much complicity in carnal man.

The Labor Movement

Pegler and Pretense

THERE'S one thing about Pegler. He doesn't pretend. And he doesn't beat around the bush. This is how he started his column on Thursday, January 28—a column that is syndicated in who knows how many hundred papers throughout the United States:

"Waiving no objections to the brutal, thieving, dictatorial character of the bosses who control all but a trifling portion of the membership of American unions, I expound the proposition that unionism is inevitably hostile to our economy and our form of government, and should be destroyed or sterilized lest it destroy the nation." That's clear enough.

I understand that many sane people take Pegler seriously. But I don't think that many of them are readers of THE COMMONWEAL and so I am not going to go back to the beginning and try to prove that unionism is not "inevitably hostile," etc., or that "all but a trifling portion" of U.S. unions are not controlled by "brutal, thieving," etc. Instead I am going right on to the point of this piece.

The point was that an open enemy is better than a concealed enemy. And honesty is better than pretense.

Employers' associations nowadays go through an elaborate pretense to prove that they are not against unions as such, but only against bad unions. It is almost refreshing to see that the Retail Dry Goods Association is in the Pegler category and doesn't care who knows it.

At their annual convention in New York last month one of the store owners' main speakers was Louis Chandler, of Stoneman and Chandler, Boston, who, in the words of *Women's Wear Daily,* presented "a primer for combatting unionization of stores." He had many excellent suggestions to offer, such as "management should exploit any derogatory facts about union officials which can be obtained, just as unions attempt to vilify management." True to Boston traditions of propriety and good taste, however, he added that any such campaign should be "dignified" and should "keep within the facts."

Another speaker at the session was Dr. Emerson P. Schmidt, research director of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber is one of those associations that pretends to be in favor of good unionism. In fact, while Eric Johnston was president, it really did sound as though it meant it. But Mr. Schmidt got up to speak to the dry goods people on employee relations and all he could talk about was pensions and other "fancy fringes." He had nothing to say about Mr. Chandler's remarks, nothing to indicate that the Chamber of Commerce did not go along with that philosophy. Or so I gather from the *Women's Wear* report, which was very complete.

Perhaps I am expecting too much. But it does seem

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that American employers and their associations cannot hope that we will believe that they are really pro-union at heart unless they are willing to get up and say so when and where it counts. And where it counts is at just such meetings as the dry goods convention.

The workingman, in short, would do well to take it for granted that most American employers are still opposed to unionism on any terms. That is a harsh and depressing conclusion to draw, but unfortunately the evidence seems to support it. Maybe too many of them take Pegler seriously.

As for the shop girls and store clerks, now still mostly non-union and suffering for it, they should soon wake up to the fact that there is some connection between their suffering—their low wages, long hours and lousy treatment—and the fact that their boss is working like crazy to keep the union out of the place. If they don't have the sense to see that, then there isn't much that can be done for them anyway.

Mr. Fairless On Profits

WHAT is a fair profit? That is one of the most basic questions that we have to answer. Until we answer it we are stymied on the whole business of licking unemployment and depressions.

And Benjamin Fairless, president of U.S. Steel, isn't helping us to answer it. Not one bit. Last month he testified before a Senate committee that was investigating the recent hike in steel prices. Below is a little exchange between Mr. Fairless and Senator O'Mahoney, Democrat of Wyoming, chairman of the committee, as reported in the New York *Times*:

Mr. Fairless said that "in my opinion U.S. Steel has not made a fair return on its sales or investment at any time during the last twenty years." Yes, he really said that.

Senator O'Mahoney said that figures showed that the corporation had made almost six per cent on its investment, "including the years of the depression." He said that that seemed to be a very good return.

"We don't accept those figures," Mr. Fairless replied.

"Is it your opinion that the other steel companies are not making a fair return?" Senator O'Mahoney said.

"It is," Mr. Fairless said.

"What would you consider a fair return?" the Senator asked.

"There are too many variables involved," Mr. Fairless replied. He added: "It's very involved. For instance, the dollar in 1948 and in 1939 varied. I would say that the figure must remain flexible."

There seems to be only one conclusion to these remarks of Mr. Fairless. It is impossible to determine what a fair profit is. Still, whatever it is, U.S. Steel isn't getting it and never did get it during the past twenty years.

I don't think Mr. Fairless is doing his part by the stockholders of U.S. Steel. He can do better than that.

JOHN C. CORT.

Communications

"The Cocktail Party"

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Kappo Phelan's rough review of T. S. Eliot's "The Cocktail Party" in the February 3 COMMONWEAL was surprising. Perhaps I'm overimpressed by T. S. Eliot's reputation, and possibly Kappo Phelan sets up an unusually strict standard of criticism for his work without telling us, but, save for a few grudging phrases, she didn't seem to give the play a thing.

With a considerable number of the other New York theatre critics, she evidently expects and demands an understanding of a play far more precise and detailed than seems to be necessary for enjoyment among people who are fairly accustomed to having art tend to reach over their heads. I would hate to have to parse Eliot's whole play and all the speeches, especially after one hearing, but more than enough came through for me (and my neighbors at the performance) to like it enormously. Furthermore, it has seemed to me that some of the critics have been playing dumb about "The Cocktail Party" because, maybe, they came with over-complicated preconceptions, or won't accept meaning they really can perfectly well see, or because they dislike misinterpreting the work more than an ordinary, care-free paying spectator need do.

If Mr. Eliot is being as perversely subtle as Kappo Phelan suspects, he is certainly much too subtle for me, and left me on a lower level altogether—but happily "basking" there. I thought it was a play about, one might say, "certain types and aspects of the love of men and women, and the relations between them and to marriage." Eliot errs in a public relations way, evidently, in letting it seem that the two "types" of relationship in love which he specially identifies are the only alternative classes practically available for the play-going public. But when Kappo Phelan says "Edward and Lavinia are condemned to a continuation of their loveless marriage," I think she is mistaken. (Perhaps she *did* remember the remark about Edward's being incapable of loving, and Lavinia incapable of being loved: an overstatement in the play, I felt, and not seriously propounded.) Their marriage is not loveless, but deprived of obviously desirable union and of soft dissolves in Metro-Goldwyn mists. It is the kind of somewhat arid people the Chamberlaynes both are, or have become (a limited, if inevitable "condemnation"); and the limitation not only of their graces, but also of their illusions. They both looked fine to me, and the author (or his "psychiatrist") calls their relation one good one. I think he rather scares the public with the Chamberlayne solution in order to emphasize that of Celia, Edward's young mistress. He also appears contradictory in not showing that Mr. and Mrs. Chamberlayne may communicate, as it were, indirectly, through the objects of appreciation and experi-

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ence, in the manner described by Peter ("most fatuous juvenile guest!") with great (and it seemed to me quite "lyric") poetic beauty when he told of loving Celia.

What makes Celia's way, and her balance of the play, mysterious escapes me. Kappo Phelan could be accused of obscurantism in so resolutely acting as though it weren't there. Her "fate" is a standard not only of Christian, but of practically every known culture. Celia will not apparently on purpose cut down her love to practical, locally satisfiable size. All for love, the theatre has said in another connection. Standard works of the theme can be found under Teresa, or Thérèse, or John, Bonaventure, Paul, indeed, or dozens of other renowned names. Again, the missionary Sister's is only one way; but it is only one evening's play. And Celia certainly receives no "condemnation," but what has not unusually been held to be the happiest life.

WHO the psychiatrist is, and what his peculiar league with Alex and Julia is, I don't claim to have understood any more clearly than Kappo Phelan. Eliot seems both to identify himself with them and, by the inference of irony, to "condemn" them. But my amateur level of incomprehension continues to be less harrassed. Perhaps they are the trinity of the modern cocktail hour (as a fairly subtle friend suggests): certainly they stand sufficient as a satirical triumvirate, lively and amusing to enjoy right away. They induce a faint aura, perhaps, of "The Passing of the Third Floor Back" (a successful play), and even (it vibrates somehow) of Dr. Buchman's Oxford groups, but at one seeing and hearing, that remains unfinished, if not therefore resented, business. Anyway, the part and the acting of Alec Guiness alone are worth the company's passage across the ocean. One can hope there are profound meanings one can gradually discover.

What seemed most surprising of all both in THE COMMONWEAL review and in a number of the newspaper columns, was the different immediate reaction to the language and poetry. It seemed to me that almost anybody at all in a wordy world would have had to cheer spontaneously the language of "The Cocktail Party"—the correct words, the rarely engraved sentences, the plunging insights, and the very funny wit, and the poetry. Instead, the "intensity" of Eliot's poetry is found to exist dryly without "emotion" or "lyricism." But "intensity" is a result of emotional and intellectual and spiritual tension. To say it is intense without having the other, and reason for the other, is surely to contradict oneself and to let down the prospective play-goer. Like the Chamberlaynes' marriage, the poetry is not built on moonlight and flowers, but it does obtain value which no other current writing for the theatre seems to, by resourcefulness and clarity in finding and forming, and by the necessity and will to bring the language's used vocabulary to new sentences of more than ordinarily full human views of our neighbors and ourselves. "The Cocktail Party" has natural impact, and the applause after the very first scene bears that out.

PHILIP BURNHAM.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

TO THE Editors: Enthusiasm proved to be the majority's reaction to T. S. Eliot's latest play, "The Cocktail Party," despite Kappo Phelan's dissenting vote. . . . Kappo Phelan's review was unreasonable, I think, both for what she did say as well as what she did not say. Readers of the THE COMMONWEAL who might have been unduly swayed by her thumbs-down attitude deserve to be advised to judge this particular play for themselves.

"The Cocktail Party" is a landmark in the literature of the day if for no other reason than in it a great poet has recited the Christian message with an eloquent directness that we so desperately need. May I call Kappo Phelan's attention to the article by Bruce Marshall, published by THE COMMONWEAL not so long ago, wherein he urged authors to give thought and effort to revitalizing the language used to preach the Word of God? "The Cocktail Party" is, I believe, a fulfillment of Marshall's plea.

Kappo Phelan declares that theatre-goers who waxed enthusiastic over Eliot's comedy were either a "parcel of fools" and/or "academic quiz kids." Yet her review is neither wise nor non-academic. Who would be reminded of "Finnegan's Wake" when the psychiatrist is heard singing "One-Eyed Riley"? Yet that is Kappo Phelan's "non-academic" reaction. I accepted it as a bit of sound characterization. Sir Henry Harcourt Riley is, in the true definition of 'psychiatrist', a man taking life seriously (but not tragically), exercising his limited but God-given insight in order to advise, instruct and save. Only a sane man is capable of levity, as only a sane man is capable of humbly adoring the God he sees in humanity, whatever be the dishonest snarls it has tied itself up in.

Who would find connotations of Blackwood, Machen and Williamson in the scene when Celia, who has taken the veil, is said to have been crucified by heathens on some obscure island? Yet that is Kappo Phelan's "non-academic" reaction. Any average playgoer will accept that particular denouement as another example of the road that the Christian saints joyously followed.

The Eliot play is not one to which a conjectural attitude can be made. There is no mystery about it. It is vital, pertinent and sorely needed. The only mystery is Kappo Phelan's review.

JOHN J. FOX.

The Catholic Press

Chicago, Illinois

TO the Editors: Donald McDonald has delivered a precise and temperate analysis of the faults of diocesan papers and of the serious defects of some proposed remedies ("The State of the Local Catholic Press," THE COMMONWEAL, February 3). But that his own remedy will be widely applied is to be doubted. Diocesan papers are weighted with a tradition of complacency, and since they are able to maintain circulation through parish assessments and other pressures there is nothing to prevent their continuing in that tradition.

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A further obstacle to their filling the rôle Mr. McDonald proposes for them is their very status as official organs. Like the priest in the pulpit, the editor of a diocesan paper, whether lay or clerical, speaks with some authority and is able to commit the Church. This power is useful and necessary when moral issues or specifically religious questions must be dealt with, but outside these areas it must be used with extreme caution or not at all.

There is no exact or visible line dividing the spiritual from the temporal order, but the distinction exists and is observed pretty closely in most sermons and official Church pronouncements. M. Maritain, in an appendix to *True Humanism,* points out the necessity for a similar distinction in the field of journalism. Obviously there must be newspapers primarily concerned with the spiritual order, with morals, doctrine and devotion, and which will promulgate episcopal decrees and report news of such movements as Catholic Action and the liturgical renewal. Such newspapers represent the teaching Church, and are thereby endowed with authority. Though Mr. McDonald is right in saying that they must not treat man as though he were a pure spirit, yet their very authority must restrain them from entering unreservedly into discussion of political or economic questions, except where moral issues are clearly at stake. If they do they are apt to make the Church appear a leftist or rightist pressure group and thus confuse their readers about the essential mission of the Church, which is not to teach economics or political science or sociology but to bring men to God by making them holy. M. Mauriac, in the address you reprinted in the pages preceding Mr. McDonald's article, shows how dangerous it is to allow confusion about this supremely important matter.

If this distinction is valid, it does not operate solely to define the limits of official papers; on the positive side it calls for the establishment of journals whose function will be complementary to that of diocesan papers. These organs would deal chiefly with human affairs in the temporal order, considering them always in the light of eternity and with full awareness of the truths of revelation, but without authority to commit the Church to any economic or political framework. It would be their task to report, interpret and judge the news according to a Christian standard.

This necessary work cannot be accomplished through existing secular papers; in fact, it is partly because of the fundamental wrong orientation of such papers that the work has become so vitally necessary. Mr. McDonald points out that most if not all secular publications are committed to a naturalistic humanism, and that few if any of them acknowledge social utility as their sole *raison d'etre.* Within such a framework it is not possible to work out the Christian philosophy of journalism Mr. McDonald calls for and which must be applied not only in the spiritual order by diocesan papers but also on the temporal plane.

Existing organs such as THE COMMONWEAL only partially fill the gap, since they are inevitably restricted in their appeal. It is not possible to enumerate or describe all the journals that conceivably could be called into being to meet the need, but it seems apparent that the greatest need is for daily papers, simply because the pattern imposed on the news by dailies is the most widespread influence forming the contemporary mind. These new papers, when they are founded, will be promoted and sold on the strength of their own journalistic competence and integrity, and not by virtue of a Catholic label.

It is relevant here to recall the traditional mode of operation through which the Church influences the social order. She creates a Christian culture by molding individuals after the model of Christ, and by teaching them their responsibility to build or reform temporal institutions—such as the daily newspaper—in His spirit. She teaches also that where a human need exists God sees it too, and will help any group that, trusting in Him, tries to meet the need.

ROBERT HOYT.

The Stage

The Innocents

WILLIAM ARCHIBALD'S play based on Henry James's *Turn Of The Screw* seems to me an astonishingly good job and it makes up into an astonishingly good theatre piece produced by Peter Cookson. I suppose the greatest single factor supporting its success will be Alex North's music—you'll remember Mr. North's work from "Death Of A Salesman"—but in truth the whole thing is fairly indivisible. Without superb direction, here supplied by Peter Glenville, the thing couldn't hold together for a minute, and since the acting is equally fine, I daresay the simplest thing will be to record the business as the weird and terrifying experience it is, and was meant to be.

Aside from what might be called *connecting chatter,* I couldn't find that Mr. Archibald had deleted anything from the James tale, nor did he seem in any way to have augmented it. Nor, and this is most important, was there any change in moral emphasis as was so outrageously presented in "The Heiress." Here are, plainly and simply written, the two children—little Flora and handsome Miles—the young enthusiastic Governess, the motherly Housekeeper. And there are, as plainly and simply, the two liveried incubi—Peter Quint and his female partner—appearing, disappearing, always present. Mr. Archibald has not cared to interpret these two personifications of evil—any more than Mr. James did. They are merely *there*: actual and seen. Heralded by Mr. North's fearful, somehow nostalgic, bells, they are there for us as well as for the taut adults and glittering children under view. If you are looking for definable terror (and I don't see why any of us should not be), I can only say that here is a theatre slice of it, wonderfully well shown.

By way of performance, the acting of small Iris Mann

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and David Cole as the Children is honestly extraordinary. It is again a tribute to Mr. Glenville's staging that these infants are no more supported by, than they are supporting their adult mentors: Isobel Elsom and Beatrice Straight. All are professional. The crucial scene—the final one—must depend, of course, upon Master Coles's understanding of his part and his scene; and upon Miss Straight's understanding of her part and his. It is accomplished perfectly. And terribly. All in all, a triumph. (*at the Playhouse*)

The Happy Time

SAMUEL TAYLOR'S title for his adaptation of Robert Fontaine's novel on the fortunes of a French Canadian family is accurate. And his subtitle is accurate, too. He has accomplished a comedy and it is a happy one. I am, unfortunately, unable to compare it with its original book, but since it is so honestly unpretentious, one cannot imagine that any large errors in translation have been committed. The time of the piece is in the early 20's; the place, Ottawa; and the legend is one of a number of grandparents, parents, aunts, and uncles, all of whom are determined to get the one small boy of the family through the trials of adolescence without tears. To say that the methods of this bunch of irrepressible relatives are unorthodox is to minimize. But it all works out into a good number of laughs, some tears, and astonishingly enough—at a crucial moment, when the family is dealing with a sadistic British schoolteacher—into plain, common, democratic sense, well and clearly stated. I must admit some lack of ease in the face of so much pidgin-English (or better, pidgin-syntax), although there is no doubt that the excellent cast handles this problem with great delicacy. Claude Dauphin in the rôle of Papa quite definitely gains the honors of the evening, but Leora Dana, Kurt Kasznar, and small Johnny Stewart are close on his heels. This is a Rodgers-Hammerstein production, a fact which to some million-odd people will explain everything. (*at the Plymouth*)

As You Like It

KATHERINE HEPBURN is starring in this Theatre Guild production of Shakespeare's play and in many ways I think it must be called a brave job. There is no question that Miss Hepburn has studied like 66 to attain the lineaments of a credible Rosalind; there is no question that she is personable and very graceful; and there is certainly no question that she is always exactly the same: sincere, intelligent, abrupt, somehow determinedly sophomoric. Watching her cavort through James Bailey's superb Forest scenes, it occurred to me that she, more than anyone else, would seem to be the feminine symbol of the 40's—not indeed a "Junior Miss," but more, a kind of "Junior Woman." God only knows what we are to be faced with in the hydrogenic 50's, but if you feel you can match your own conception of Rosalind with Miss Hepburn's known style, I think you are going to have a very good time with this version.

Moreover, as I have said, Mr. Bailey's mounting, and also his dresses, are superb, and these perfectly point the imaginative and inventive staging by Michael Benthall. My choice among the plain players is Bill Owen's Touchstone, and dear old Aubrey Mather's Duke. Mr. Mather succeeded in making me cry, and Mr. Owen succeeded in making me laugh: a round deal if ever there was one. But the entire cast is illustrious and should be so recorded. I should honestly list this as breathless holiday stuff for all kids and cousins; and otherwise, as a fair escape for the rest of the weekday world. (*at the Cort*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

The Screen

Little Boy Blue Blew

THERE is so much to be said in favor of *"Young Man With a Horn"* that I am sorry that the film as a whole doesn't come off. The last third is definitely muddled and the final scenes give the impression of having been monkeyed with by bosses overanxious to please a large public. But as a fascinating, well-made study of a young man in love with a trumpet, this movie will hold your interest throughout. The first part about the lonely boy (played by Orley Lindgren) who is attracted to music and then, through a Negro trumpeter (Juano Hernandez), to jazz and the trumpet, is superb. Director Michael Curtiz has been particularly skilful in portraying Rick's musical education and training by this Negro and Rick's young manhood episodes (after Kirk Douglas takes over the rôle). Rick acquires two more friends and guides, a pianist (Hoagy Carmichael) and a singer (Doris Day) but people are for him of secondary importance; his great passion is for jazz and the trumpet. Rick's downfall, when he has to face reality, is only a matter of time. Through the singer Rick meets a wealthy young girl (Lauren Bacall) who is even more confused about life than he is; and their marriage with its conflicting personalities and goals ends in a crash. His wife escapes—perhaps no better or worse off than before, but Rick slides down the scale to the breakdown that was inevitable. The one event, more than any other, that makes Rick face himself and life is the death of the shamefully neglected Negro teacher who helped him reach the heights.

I don't know exactly how Producer Jerry Wald should have ended his movie. The script, by Carl Foreman and Edmund H. North, stems from the novel by Dorothy Baker which is frequently referred to as being about Bix Beiderbecke—a suggestion I consider totally unfair with a fictional work of this kind. But in any case if the movie is to end on a happy note, we must have something more than the abrupt transition at the finale. A man who feels secure only with music has about as much chance of growing into mature adulthood as

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Little Boy Blue. The music in "Young Man with a Horn", however, is considerably beyond the nursery stage, and Harry James' superior trumpeting adds a great deal to the conviction of Kirk Douglas' performance. The acting throughout this movie is good, and although the themes are not particularly pleasant, the story and musical atmosphere will hold you whether you're hep or not.

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FOR those who prefer entertainment to be more humorous and less realistic there are a couple of comedies that may fit the bill. *"Key to the City"* submits Clark Gable and Loretta Young as two very glamorous mayors attending a mayors' convention in San Francisco. She, being rather prim though pretty, wants to take the convention seriously; and he, being an ex-longshoreman and considerably interested in an atom dancer (Marilyn Maxwell), thinks such a gathering away from home should concentrate more on fun than on committees. Since this is a comedy, he wins out and finally wins Loretta—although it does take a little forced humor to put over the plot. The fight sequence (with longshoreman's hooks) is entirely out of keeping with the picture's general kittenish mood, but devotees of the stars and of Frank Morgan and James Gleason will no doubt warm up to this version of love-conquering-all—even politics.

Theater and movie goers who laughed at "Dear Ruth" can now laugh at *"Dear Wife,"* its sequel which continues the comedy-romance of Bill and Ruth in a New York suburb. William Holden and Joan Caulfield are still loving and bickering in the lead roles, and Billy De Wolfe is still hanging around making a nuisance of himself as Ruth's ex-suitor. A starting point for the row comes when Bill and Ruth's father (Edward Arnold) campaign against each other for the state senatorship. This leads to several scuffles and good wholesome humor. If you want to relax at the end of a long day, "Dear Wife" is just the movie to help you; furthermore it comes to the comforting conclusion that the good old American family is a fine institution and here to stay.

The French film, *"Gigi"*, is willing to let a little lightness into the world's woes, but it sees the upper middle class of Paris at the turn of the century as a pretty decadent lot. The plot, based on a story by Colette, follows the training given a fifteen-year-old girl who is being prepared for a world in which most men are self-centered libertines with a series of mistresses. It seems for a while, after this film has run two-thirds of its repetitive, mannered and tiresome course, that Gigi is going to rebel successfully against the career staked out for her by her elders. But the closest she comes to breaking away is in insisting that her wealthy suitor marry her. The film, which is meant to be a comedy but it rather pathetic, ends on this sad note, and the future of this ill-matched couple can only be guessed at. The acting and the *fin de siecle* sets and costumes in *"Gigi"* are outstanding. I should prefer however that the French themselves comment on the reality of the mores which this film illustrates. PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Of Note

Catholic College Graduates and Parish Life

THE observation that "only a minority" of Catholic college graduates are active in the work of their parishes was the reason for a recent conference held in Washington by a group of young graduates. The purpose of the conference was to discuss a way whereby young Catholics trained in college "might receive necessary support and encouragement in order to carry on the apostolate in their post-graduate lives," and to outline an informal organization to carry this program out.

"Up to this time," the conference reported, "the fact stands that only a minority of Catholic college graduates" are taking a direct active part in the activities of their parish and diocese. As the parish is the basic social unit of the Church, the failure of graduates to take a responsible part in its activity is most serious. The conference felt that the difficulty usually was in the young graduate's failure to adjust himself to the circumstances peculiar to parish life.

The initial action the members of the conference planned was specific study and discussion of the problems of parish life, and personal action in the work of their own parishes and in contacting other young graduates about work in their localities.

To facilitate this work, which is essentially personal, the conference set up a national center for the exchange and correlation of ideas and information. The committee coordinator is Miss Mary Cecil Dodge, 760 Prospect Street, New Haven, Connecticut; all those interested in taking part in the program should write her.

At a diocesan level the persons involved will meet for the purpose of study, discussion and active cooperation as may seem necessary.

The conference emphasized that in the parish itself there was to be no mechanism, no formal organization. The organization, as such, will initiate no parish activity. All such activity is individual and personal. The organization exists only to facilitate and encourage the work of individual graduates.

The immediate plans of the group include assembling as much information as possible on the problems faced, and activity undertaken by the people taking part.

The first information letter issued by the coordination center included this statement by a priest interested in the work that is being planned: "the parish is still the fundamental unit of Catholic life. . . . Most of the work must be done by lay people imbued with the true apostolic spirit of Catholicism and sustained, nourished and motivated by a deep spirituality. . . . It seems to me that the two most fundamental things are a desire to advance in holiness and deep humility. . . ."

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Muted Tragedy

Leo J. Trese

"HOMOSEXUAL" is an unpleasant word. It is unpleasant to normal people, because it adds a complication to human relationships which already are sufficiently involved. It is unpleasant to the homosexuals themselves, because of the stigma attached to it, the badge of a contemned minority. But unpleasant or not, it stands for a problem that is as old as recorded history. It was not for nothing that the third book of the Bible decreed death for those guilty of the sin of Sodom.

The true homosexual himself (or herself) is a freak of nature as is the albino or the midget, according to medical science. The abnormality is due to an imbalance of the hormones which are found mixed in every human —the male hormones predominating in a man, the female predominating in a woman. When the proportion is distorted, through some accident of nature, sex deviation may be the result.

All this is familiar enough. Also familiar, at least to the Christian, is the fact that the homosexual is not deserving of contempt merely by reason of his abnormality —no more than we should despise one because of a cleft palate or crossed eyes. It is not the deviant impulse that incurs condemnation, but rather the surrender to that impulse; just as a man of normal passions becomes culpable only when he fails to control his deep-seated urges.

Indeed, it is quite conceivable that one might be a homosexual and become a saint, since it is by the conquest of temptation that sanctity is developed, under God's grace. Since, "the greater the temptation the greater the merit", the homosexual who achieves self-discipline is doubly admirable, since he must do so despite the lack of safeguards which shelter the person of normal impulses —all the careful segregations which separate the sexes in the more intimate matters of daily living.

Besides the definite homosexuals — from whom the ranks of the perverts are recruited—there are any number of borderline cases, men and women in whom the balance is so close as to be capable of upset by unusual stress. It is they who constitute a pressing social problem in prisons, in reformatories, in expeditionary forces—in any isolated group cut off from normal human contacts, and lacking a strong religious spirit to offset errant impulses.

The problem is one that administrators of boarding schools have to contend with, too. The evil may be less pressing because of wholesome outside interests, and definitely less pressing when there is a healthy and well-integrated religious program. But the danger always is there. It is the reason why the prefect of discipline in a boarding school must ever keep an anxious eye out for "particular friendships". Not the pal-to-pal sort of chumminess that characterizes two youngsters interested in the same sports, the same boogie-woogie, the same movie stars. Rather the type of companionship that is exclusive of all others and resents the intrusion of third parties; that seeks private retreats where the two may commune together; that brings discontent and moodiness to one if the other be absent.

REV. LEO. J. TRESE *is pastor of Saint Patrick's Church in Carleton, Michigan. He is the author of* Vessels of Clay, *soon to be published by Sheed and Ward.*

★

IT IS WITH this problem that Roger Peyrefitte deals in his novel, *Special Friendships* (Vanguard. $3.50). M. Peyrefitte sets his novel, which is translated from the French, in a boarding school conducted by priests. The mutual attraction of George de Sarre, age fifteen, and Alexander Motier, age twelve and a half, provides the theme. The conflict is readily contributed by a world allied against them, and suspense is inevitable as their pitiable friendship awaits only the nature of the tragedy that must ultimately crown it.

Although written in the third person, it is through the eyes of George de Sarre that we follow the whole sequence of events. The judgments passed on persons, things, and motives, are his judgments. Because he is not quite a normal boy, everything is colored by his abnormality. His is the fallible vision of fever-ridden eyes. And these is no immorality that tends to fashion the world in its own image, like that of the pervert. A thief will believe in the honesty of other men; the liar will fatten on his confidence in the truthfulness of the men he deceives; but to the actualized deviate, there is no integrity anywhere.

As a consequence, there is a taint of the diabolical upon all that the book touches. The priests are fools, except Father de Trennes who is worse than a fool; the saints were disgusting people, not nearly so interesting as the demi-gods of antiquity; indulgences are a debauchery of mathematics; the Mass is a pretty mummery, and Communion is a joke which the boys have on their professors, because surely no one is receiving worthily. George doesn't say these things, but it is how we see things as we live through the year with him.

The one bright spot of the book is Alexander. Even through George's neurotic vision his splendor cannot be entirely dimmed.

Which is to say, I suppose, that Peyrefitte has constructed his characters well. Too well, in a sense. Through many a passage the author has his youngsters talking like poets at an important *salon*. Either French children are far more precocious than their American counterparts (which I would not know), or M. Peyrefitte has forgotten the limited imagery and vocabulary of his own boyhood. Or perhaps he has felt that the idea was more important than the dialogue, and has been content to let the youths speak in his own accents.

There is a smoothness to the prose of *Special Friendships*, a skill in building up situations, an exploratory thoroughness that will not be hurried yet gives no sense of delay, that marks the author as a first-class craftsman

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and his book as one that is bound to be read. I cannot help wishing that M. Peyrefitte had exercised his very evident talent on a subject of more importance than the furtive relationship of two boys. But perhaps the fact that he has done so much with so little is a feather in the author's cap.

Incidentally, his picture of French boarding-school life, while it may be typical of his own country, is not an accurate picture of things as they exist in our own schools of similar intent. There is, however, enough of a likeness to emphasize the fact that a boarding-school by its very nature is an unnatural sort of life for a growing boy. There are times and circumstances when, like hospitals, boarding-schools are a blessed alternative to something worse. But the institution hasn't yet been invented which can substitute for a genuine home, where parental love and attention, and normal relationships, enable a boy to achieve manhood with a minimum of pain to himself. If Roger Peyrefitte has done nothing else than to let parents see that there is a confession of failure on their own part, when they try to unload upon others a responsibility that they alone can discharge—then he has done something eminently worth-while.

Books

The German Catastrophe. Friedrich Meinecke. Harvard. $3.00.

WHEN Hitler's Third Reich, which he expected to last at least a thousand years, finally collapsed in the thirteenth year of its shameful existence; and all its "successes", advertised to the German people with trumpets and kettle drums, vanished into nothingness, the Germans were completely stupified and unable to grasp the meaning of the happenings. In this situation the Nestor of the German historians, a liberal who always had disliked the Hitler regime, wrote analyzing the causes of the catastrophe and the possibilities of a new German future.

It is the book of a profound historian, no doubt, but at the same time a book of personal emotions and reflections, written amidst defeat and disillusionment, in a situation when only chaos was visible and the further development of Germany was mere guess. In the four years since the book was published, the outlines of Germany's fate became more perceptible, and the partition of Germany is a fait accompli. The great chances of the German Federative Republic as an integral part of a new Western Europe became evident, and even the development of German cultural life can already be diagnosed.

Sidney B. Fay, Harvard's Professor Emeritus of European History, offers us an English version of the book that makes as beautiful reading as it is an accurate translation. But we have some doubt whether it is fair to the author to publish his book four years late, without giving him a chance to revise it, since we are convinced that Professor Meinecke would today formulate many phrases somewhat differently from his draft in the first nervous months of the catastrophe. Nevertheless it is good that this honest and intelligent analysis is published in English, and it will be useful reading, if one is always aware of the fact that he reads a book published in Germany four years ago.

I was a student of Friedrich Meinecke thirty-five years ago, when he was in the prime of his productivity. He was the most open-minded among the German historians of his generation, a man of great personal refinement, well versed in modern literature, music and painting. He had started his career as a Prussian archivist, had written the biography of Hermann von Boyen, a Prussian field marshal of the Napoleonic era, and of Joseph Maria Radowitz, the Catholic minister of the Prussian King Frederick William IV. With great energy he concentrated on the history of ideas; his books, *Cosmopolitanism and the National State*, *"Staatsraison" in Modern History* and *The Genesis of Historicism*, are among the standard works of European history in the first four decades of the twentieth century. In the new book I hear the familiar tone of Meinecke's subtlety and honesty, but added to these are resignation and mellow wisdom, the product of old age amidst the turmoil of a revolutionary era.

★

IN THE years I knew Meinecke he had rather secularized ideas on religion, though he was too cultured a gentleman to attack the religious convictions of others. Now he has learned to understand the necessity of genuine religion for people who wish to resist evil, and he understands the light that endangered human beings find within their religious community. Now he asks not merely for tolerance but for respect for all the churches and religious movements—for the common religious heritage of the Christian Occident, without which Europe will fall into the abyss of nihilism. Only religious life on a Christian basis seems able to bridge the cleavage between the nations and to reconcile the vanquished and the victors.

The political liberalism of Meinecke has survived and is perhaps even more pronounced. He is not frightened by the fact that the external apparatus of the German state was smashed, because he expects the reconstruction of Germany to come from the realm of the spirit and wants it as unregulated and spontaneous as possible. It seems he placed great expectations on Goethe's bicentennial and hoped for a flourishing of Goethe societies and Goethe communities that would stir up the familiarity of the Germans with their greatest poet. It is evident now that this was wishful thinking of the idealistic professor and that Goethe, though politically abused by all of today's parties and movements, is too far away from the actual needs and problems of this generation, perhaps also too secularized, to be the focus of a new regeneration, as Meinecke had hoped. MAX FISCHER.

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I Leap Over the Wall. Monica Baldwin. Rinehart. $3.50.

THE full title of this book is *I Leap Over the Wall: Contrasts and Impressions after Twenty-eight years in a Convent.* Quite a tag. It manages to suggest Maria Monk, *The Seven Storey Mountain,* Rip Van Winkle and, after one learns that the author is the niece of Stanley Baldwin, one of those family glimpses of the great at home. Actually Miss Baldwin's book is something different from all of these.

Her picture of convent life is remarkably impersonal. The reader never gets a very distinct focus on the author as contemplative nun though the witty woman of the world comes through clearly. It seems that she has already become so attuned to life outside that when she writes of herself as a nun it is as if she were talking about some half-remembered stranger. But for 28 long years Monica Baldwin did wear the veil in an enclosed English convent. She says now that she was "no more fitted to be a nun than to be an acrobat." Still through all the years between the two wars she held on. "The only thing to do was to set one's teeth and go on with it, if not from inclination, then by the sheer dogged force of will."

But the day came when she could go on no longer. She applied for formal ecclesiastical dispensation. In time a letter came from Rome, and the fashionable, pretty girl who walked into the cloister in 1914 returned to the world a plain, middle-aged woman in 1942, wearing clothes that made her feel uncomfortably under-dressed, going into a strange and foreign place—an England, remember, that was very much at war. Nineteen forty-two was quite a challenge to one who never heard of the Unknown Soldier, Jazz, Lend-Lease, *Cavalcade* or the Lambeth Walk, she tells us. Cocktails, Woolworth, Hollywood, strip-tease were words that had no meaning for her. Greta Garbo, Picasso, D. H. Lawrence and Schiaparelli, she says, meant far less to her than the names of Saint Augustine's contemporaries. For, among other things, Miss Baldwin in the convent had become something of an authority on the Augustinian period. She also had a great deal of experience with illuminating manuscripts. Neither of these accomplishments, of course, was valued very highly in the economy of the British war machine. Still the lady had to find a job. She was unwilling to become a charge on her relatives and she had no personal income.

★

WELL, that's where *I Leap Over the Wall* begins. How the former nun made her way in the world, her adventures in the work-a-day war jobs she found and her gradual adjustment to the crazy world that awaited her over the wall (a little thing like keeping her hands in full view at the table became a matter for conscious effort) is the story Miss Baldwin tells. Throughout, she weaves in the conventual past, with highly intelligent and sympathetic explanations of the religious life. There is nothing sensational or lurid here. There is some criticism of what is surely not essential to the religious life and certainly not beyond criticism, but no bias or sullen resentment. Her sections on the divine office, on the good reasoning behind penance and mortification, and on the motivation behind dedicated celibacy are particularly good. *I Leap Over the Wall,* despite that purple title, cannot but make the religious life more understandable to those who wonder.

Miss Baldwin writes frankly of herself and her family. The former Prime Minister figures in the story only slightly, just to the degree that he is involved in her own Rip Van Winkle adventures. He never intrudes in the narrative where he doesn't belong. After awhile one forgets that Uncle Stan is anything more than a fond relative. Miss Baldwin is much too well bred for the name-dropping game.

I Leap Over the Wall was serialized in a London paper and, I understand, luridly illustrated, as if it were some kind of Georgia Chain Gang exposé. I hope the book receives more intelligent treatment in the U.S. Miss Baldwin had an unusual experience. Happily she also had the ability and the grace to describe it with wit, a great deal of charm and the insights of a profoundly religious and sensible woman. JOHN COGLEY.

The Horse's Mouth. Joyce Cary. Harper. $3.00.

SELDOM has a novel raced in such swirls of action and color as Joyce Cary's *The Horse's Mouth.* Infrequently does slapstick comedy, wit and tragedy commingle so naturally between covers.

Gulley Jimson, the Blake-within-Blake painter, rapscallion and philosopher blasts one to attention, shakes the would-be wanderer into a fascinated awareness of Gulley's genius, his Rabelaisian greatness. Accompanied by indescribably vivid characters from London's waterfront, our Blake-mad painter bellows, whimpers, blasphemes, drinks, fights, steals, paints and cozens his way through one of the most exciting and rightly written novels I've read in many moons.

The lodestone and mainspring of the novel is William Blake, the more refined Gulley Jimson of his day. The visions of this poet-painter, philosopher and mystic, churn Gulley on relentlessly. In the color of the Thames, the arrangement of sunset tints beats the impassioned parabola of stars and suns and moons of Blake's *Prophetic Visions.* And Gulley, when his swash begins to buckle, is as religious, despite his comic asides, as the most frenetic Evangelist. Gulley's world is full of tigers burning bright in the Bunyanesque jungles hard by his neo-Blake Jerusalem. Even with all his slangy, poetic talk, Gulley doesn't circumnavigate. That is to say, the reader, with directness, swiftness and flamboyancy, is transported from a sunset to a pub to a West End dwelling to a flop-house with a real sense of knowing and seeing them all intimately. The rampaging Jimson is toughness and tenderness, poetry and burlesque. "And I went out to get room for

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my grief. Thank God, it was a high sky on Greenbank. Darker than I expected. But the edge of the world was still a long way off. . . . River whirling along so fast that its skin was pulled into wrinkles like silk dragged over the floor. Shot silk. Fresh breeze off the eyot. Sharp as spring frost. Ruffling under the silk-like muscles in a nervous horse. Ruffling under my grief like ice and hot daggers." And his description of Plant, the broken-down Evangelist: "I like Plant. A regular Old King Walrus. Genus, Chapellius. Species, Blue-suitius, Bandy-leggus. Steady as a burst barometer. Putting one foot in front of the other. On account of the curl in his legs."

It is natural that in this, his autobiography, Gulley Jimson should have to paint the Creation on the wall of a condemned chapel, that he should want to cover Sir William's hall walls with the Raising of Lazarus, that his descriptions of Coker, the lemonish barmaid, Nosy Barbon, his faithful disciple, should be as apocalyptic as the vision of Job and at the same time brilliantly modern. His mural covers a wide wall, but it is not just the wall's surface that Mr. Cary paints; it is the inside of the stars, the pubs, the flashing river, the soft flesh within the tough hippopotamus hide, the unheard whimper within the bawdy oath.

And still William Blake, "Rantipole Billy" as Gulley affectionately calls him, hovers over the entire book. Even the smaller fry are motivated by his "Wood of Self-Murderers;" tree-trunks alive with betrayed faces, branches filled with ravening birds of prey, and the wood itself entombing irretrievably the innocent wanderer.

Yes, *The Horse's Mouth* is an event—not only in literature, but in roistering, fallible, disgusting, endearing humanity. Mr. Cary deserves all the bravos usually shouted at the Ambers and the Anthonys.

When I had my defiance given,
The sun stood trembling in heaven;
The moon, that glowed remote below,
Became leprous and white as snow;
And every soul of man on the earth
Felt affliction and sorrow and sickness and dearth.

ELIZABETH JOHNSON.

Dreamers of Dreams. Holbrook Jackson. Farrar, Straus. $3.50.

IF one has no objection to the tracing out of an intellectual lineage in the rather tenuous terms of "idealism," then the late Holbrook Jackson's *Dreamer of Dreams* is simply a pleasant series of essays on Carlyle, Ruskin, Morris, Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman. Though Mr. Jackson intends to illustrate, according to the subtitle, "The Rise and Fall of 19th Century Idealism," *Dreamers of Dreams* is less an account of idealism than a leisurely and informal circumscription of the writers themselves, their personalities, opinions and beliefs. Carlyle is the disgruntled master, Ruskin and

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Morris his divergent English disciples; Emerson is Carlyle's devoted American pupil, and Thoreau and Whitman follow, and disagree with, Emerson. But Mr. Jackson's theme is often lost amid minor explorations into personal idiosyncrasy, and into often embarrassing incompatibilities between the thoughts of master and pupil.

Though he brings out, in the case of each writer, the personal faults or defects which in varying degrees forbade a complete and harmonious expression of belief, Mr. Jackson is discreet enough to refrain from psychoanalysis, and sensible enough to regard the testimony of personal struggle and failure in larger, more meaningful contexts. Bound together, for different reasons of course, by a rejection of quantitative valuation, these men were overwhelmed—but not obliterated—by forces which must run their course; they were powerful and articulate personalities in an age that was almost uniformly dedicated to the pursuit of wealth. *Dreamers of Dreams* is interesting, at least, for the liberal supply of quotations from the writers themselves, which reveal their opinions and acknowledgments of each other, and for the momentary—if sometimes deceptive—light which an unusual juxtaposition may strike up.

Coming by chance from the earnest and prophetic words of Ruskin to *Dreamers of Dreams,* a reader cannot fail to detect in Mr. Jackson an unfortunate quality of literary aloofness or remoteness—that false dispensation of the critical mind which permits the employment of a spurious freedom and the establishment of a wholly unreal point of view—and which in *Dreamers of Dreams* takes the comparatively harmless form of a leisurely and gratuitous exploration, complete with pipe, armchair and bookcase.

J. H. JOHNSTON.

Saints Are Not Sad. Forty Biographical Portraits assembled by F. J. Sheed. Sheed and Ward. $3.75.

THE art of hagiography has had its development like that of any other literary medium. Jacobus de Voragine wrote his *Golden Legend* for an audience thirsty for the romantic and the extraordinary: his modern successor writes for a public interested in the psychological unfolding of character, seeing a significance in the most trivial details of personality, and demanding the full explication of any detail, however trivial, that might cast light upon the theological implications of that unfolding.

This change in point of view is admirably illustrated by Mr. Sheed's collection. Only one of the lives which he has assembled—the third-century *Passion of SS. Perpetua and Felicity*—is not "modern;" and this, of all the *acta sanctorum* of the early or medieval Church, is one that has an attitude toward its subject which is most sympathetic to the modern reader. All the writers attempt—with, as would be expected in a compilation of this sort, varying degrees of success—a delineation of the

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saint best calculated to show the workings of grace upon nature—sometimes, indeed, the triumph of grace over nature. But the natural is never neglected. It, too, is viewed as the result of God's providence: and in such an emphasis lies the chief value of the book.

There is a good deal of interest in comparing in each case, the writer with his subject. The breezy enthusiasms of Father Martindale (represented by eight lives in this collection) fit admirably Paul, Thomas Aquinas, Vincent de Paul, and John Bosco; less admirably, perhaps, Anthony of Egypt, Edward the Confessor, and Peter Claver. Archbishop Goodier, with seven lives (that of Augustine the most refreshing), gives sober and convincing accounts, as does Father Steuart, with six. Father Vincent McNabb, with three, is somewhat less sober and convincing. The essay on Thomas More by Chesterton is not among the happiest productions of that author; but Hilaire Belloc's Thomas of Canterbury presents Belloc at his best, and on a theme virtually become his personal property. Gervase Mathew's Bede is "literary" in the most humanistic sense of that abused term, and hence particularly well fitted to its subject.

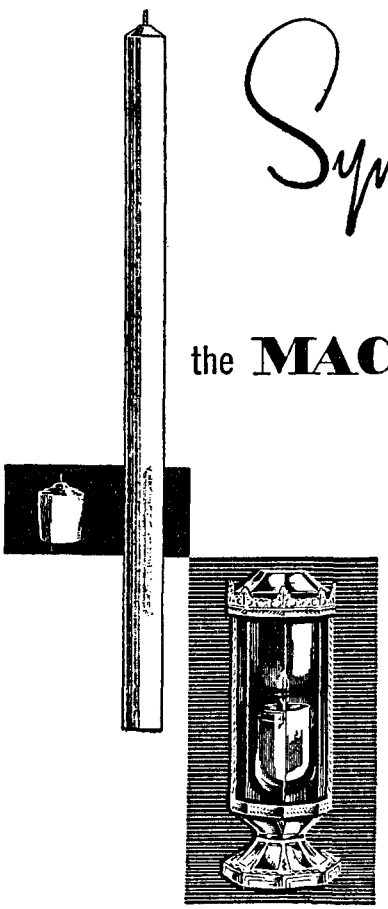
Everyone will discover omissions of this or that favorite saint or favorite hagiographer; but to include a list of them here would be, no doubt, merely to anticipate Mr. Sheed, who, it is to be hoped, is busily engaged assembling a second collection—to be produced as attractively as this one.

ALBAN BAER.

The Peabody Sisters of Salem. Louise Hall Tharp. Little, Brown. $4.

IF THIS BOOK had been written as a monograph instead of as popular biography, it might have been entitled "Three Facets of the New England Female." For the Peabody sisters were very different in their common Yankeeness. Two of them are well-known minor characters in accounts of New England's nineteenth century flowering: Sophia, the youngest, who married Hawthorne after wavering between art and invalidism, and Elizabeth, the eldest, who assisted Dr. Channing and Bronson Alcott and never lacked a "cause" for indefatigable activity until she died at almost 90, long established as the "grandmother of Boston." The third, Mary, who married Elizabeth's beau Horace Mann and led a life as intellectually active as her sister's, but on a practical rather than a theoretical level, is less well-known.

Mrs. Tharp, who has previously written historical stories for children and biographies for young people, has written an entertaining collective biography of these three women, in and out of whose lives wander many of the great intellectual figures of the time. Feminine intuition and sympathy supplement careful research—the book is based largely on manuscript letters and journals. She has made real people of her three heroines and humanized the great names to which they were linked, though she has contributed little to an under-



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What is the special function of The Commonweal in the field of American Catholic journalism? This is the way Francis Downing put it in the New York *Herald Tribune*, February 6, 1950:

The Commonweal is not a "religious" magazine at all but is a paper run by Catholics who, putting permanent value on human personality, preserve that touchstone always when making judgment on contemporary affairs. Thus it regards freedom as responsibility and as an exercise of the right of the person to affirm his conscience as against the merely material force of either a majority or a directing minority. Whole spaces, therefore, of man's mind and spirit must be unconvinced, untouched and unconquered by the State, whose business it is to protect and to assist its citizens. It is around this core of beliefs that The Commonweal is organized.

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standing of that greatness. *The Peabody Sisters* is essentially a feminine footnote to *The Flowering of New England.*

MASON WADE.

Mary O'Grady. Mary Lavin. Atlantic—Little, Brown. $3.00.

MARY LAVIN'S second full-length novel is chiefly concerned with a humble, Irish mother for whom sorrow piled on sorrow failed to shake her faith in God.

Mary O'Grady's love for her husband grew deeper with the years as five children were born to them, three girls and two boys. All went well until the children were mostly grown, and then the sorrows came. They would have crushed a weaker woman. Mary O'Grady has the strength to survive because she receives her sorrows as coming from the will of God. Yet she is a very human person whose failings were not unnoticed by her family. Perhaps that is why she is so very credible, as are all the characters in this book.

This gift of characterization, denied to so many writers, has been given in great abundance to Mary Lavin. Unfortunately, however, she has another gift, a typically feminine one, of words, far too many of them. As a result, the plot is loosely-jointed and long drawn out. Less verbal profuseness and a tightening up of the plot machinery would have added immeasurably to the effect of this book. But as it is, *Mary O'Grady* is an absorbing story.

J. C. LEHANE.

• REVIEWERS •

MAX FISCHER is on the faculty of the New School in New York.

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Rev. ALBAN BAER, O.S.B., teaches English at the Portsmouth Priory School, Portsmouth, Rhode Island.

MASON WADE is an historian whose most recent book is *The Journals of Francis Parkman.*

REV. J. C. LEHANE, C.M., is on the faculty of DePaul University, Chicago, and is director of the Irish Library there.

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